

City of Bangor, Commission on Cultural Development
Minutes
September 11, 2014
8:30 AM
City Council Chambers

Commissioners Present: George Kinghorn (Chair), Judy Boothby (Vice Chair) Tom Avila, Jamie Ballinger, Mary Budd, Uli Guthrie, Kat Johnson, Kierie Piccininni, and Caitlin Brooke (staff)

Commissioners Absent: Councilor Josh Plourde, Elissa Young

Guests: Annette Sohns

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Uli and seconded by Judy to approve the previous meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

3. Discussion of Arts and Cultural Policy

George thanked all the Commissioners for their work on the policy. He recognized the effort it took to construct each section as well as combining each piece to a cohesive document.

In late August, George and Caitlin met with City staff to present the Arts and Cultural Policy and solicit feedback. Staff provided minor language edits and, overall, was positive about the policy and the direction it was providing for the Commission. George cited a few examples of changes that were made because of staff recommendation.

4. Approval to Recommend Arts and Cultural Policy

A motion was made by Kierie and seconded by Jamie to approve the previous meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

5. Timeline of Arts and Cultural Policy

Caitlin outlined important dates surrounding the approval of the Arts and Cultural Policy. The policy will first go to the Business and Economic Development Committee on September 16 at 5:15 p.m. in Council Chambers. If approved, the policy will go in front of the full City Council on September 22 at 7:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

6. Grant Press Release

Caitlin mentioned that last meeting Commissioners had voiced interest in sending out press releases to publicize the availability of grants to organizations and artists. Kierie will help to proof releases and Caitlin will distribute to City's media list and asked for Commissioners to utilize their networks to disseminate the information.

7. Other Business

Mural by Annette Sohns

Local business owner and artist Annette Sohns has successfully gone through the process of approval for a mural which she is currently working on in downtown Bangor.

She began by saying the best way to combat graffiti is to put up art. The side of the Main Tavern, where Annette is painting her mural, was a hot spot for graffiti and the Tavern's owner Peter was continually painting over it.

The process Annette went through included first finding an image that would be community centric and visually appealing. She then approached the City of Bangor's Code Enforcement department to seek information about what sort of permits she would need to do this. They informed her that she would essentially be applying for a sign since there isn't a permit specifically for murals. Annette stressed the importance of 1.) adding visual layouts and designs and providing all the information necessary 2.) having everything in on time 3.) constructing a detailed plan and 4.) filling out the permit/application for Historic Preservation Commission. She also had to show proof that she had talked to the building's owners about the mural project and received their permission. In Annette's case, this was a Facebook conversation.

She then presented her project to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and was careful to be sure that all materials were submitted prior to the HPC's next meeting date. The materials she included were a detailed cover letter of the project, visuals which included the blank wall, then she superimposed an image on it with measurements, and examples of other cities that have allowed similar murals. The HPC approved the mural without objection.

Annette noted that the next mural may be a bit more difficult to pass through HPC as the image she is painting has universal appeal and is more main stream. She noted it did take a little longer than she expected but this was due to the fact that it was a historic building.

Her recommendation to anyone looking to do a mural in the future is to be organized and have all your information in order.

Georg asked if approval from the City Council was needed. It was not.

Jamie inquired how Annette paid for the project. Annette wrote a letter to Home Depot, requesting donation of supplies and they did. She noted that they are always open to supporting the art and persistence pays off.

Kierie asked if there is an expectation of maintenance? Annette said she would commit to five years of maintenance. Her next step is to coat the completed mural with coating and shellac (recommended by Home Depot.). If this doesn't work, she'll have to repaint.

Judy noted that she had approached the HPC with another artist and they were reluctant to approve murals. She commended Annette on paving the way for others.

George also praised Annette for her work and thanking her for giving the Commission a summary of her experience as it will serve as a resource for others. This project took away the "scary unknown" of a mural of many people—it's a real icebreaker.

Annette thanked everyone and said she hopes to be done by the end of the month. At that time she'll alert media for any stories they are interested in.

Frequency of Commission on Cultural Development Meetings

George asked if Commissioners thought that meeting every month was necessary. It was noted that if the Arts and Cultural Policy is adopted, there will be a lot of committee work which will require more of a time commitment from Commissioners outside of the regular meetings.

Jamie suggested that the Commission maintain the monthly meetings and have the option to cancel any if nothing comes up for the agenda. She mentioned that the Arts and Cultural Policy, if approved, requires a lot of time and attention.

Kierie recommended workshop style meetings like the Commission did for the development of the policy. This way the Commissioners can really dig into the initiatives and strategies. With the forward thinking policy in place, it is hard to think we would be meeting less.

Upcoming Events

George reminded everyone that the Art Walk is happening on Friday, September 12 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. UMaine is programming a bus to run students to and from campus to downtown Bangor. He also mentioned that the museum's five new fall exhibitions are opening on October 2 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Uli noted that the Bangor Arts Society will be meeting at Diversified Ink. The first meeting is scheduled for September 23 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Mary announced that the Penobscot Theatre kicked off its 41st season, with Honky Tonk Angels. The theatre also has a new director of education, Amy Rader, leading education program which starts this fall with Frankenstein. They are offering, for the first time, an intensive acting class for high school age students who have serious interest in pursuing dramatic theater in higher education. On Monday, September 15 at 7 p.m., the PTC welcomes Maine Science Festival. There will be a panel discussion—"The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly—Science in Film. This event is the first to spark interest for the March 2015 Maine Science Festival.

November 7 at 8 p.m. Improv Maine Group will perform at the Next Generation Theater. This group is the first of its kind in Maine. (Kat)

ACE (Active Community Environment) Conference is September 25 at the Unitarian Universalist Church. (Kierie)

BangPop! Comic Con is September 20 and 21 at the Cross Insurance Center (Tom)

Bangor Ballet sent out notices about audition results for "Nutcracker in a Nutshell." Downeast School will be a site for the performance. (Judy)

Downtown Bangor Fall Clean Up will be on October 18 (October 19 rain date) starting at 9 p.m. Volunteers will not only be cleaning up debris, etc. but also hanging winter lights around downtown. (Jamie)

Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.